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ART. II. — Coleridge.

The Friend: a Series of Essays to aid in the Formation of fixed Principles in Politics, Morals and Religion; with Literary Amusements interspersed. By S. T. COLERIDGE, Esq. 3 vols. 12mo. London, 1818.

WE regard as a peculiar privilege, the opportunity to express our admiration of the genius, character, and writings of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It is rarely, indeed, that God has placed such a mind as his in an earthly mould, to shed its splendor on a world in ruins. We regard him with feelings of veneration and love, which we have paid to few other names in English Literature. Nor does the obloquy, by which he was pursued through life, in the least degree lessen that veneration. It was the inevitable accompaniment of his greatness. It was the appropriate testimony of an age of littleness and superficiality, towards one, who towered in such grandeur beyond the measure of all his contemporaries. "It was not only in the Roman customs," said Burke, with indignant feeling of the wrongs that had been heaped upon him, "it was not only in the Roman customs, but it is in the nature and constitution of things, that calumny and abuse are essential parts of triumph."

The idea of Coleridge's mind rises in the world of intellect, like the "MONARCH OF MOUNTAINS" in the world of nature, a shape of severe and awful grandeur, arresting the gaze of the soul, and awing it with sublimity and mystery. He was of that class of men, "whose mind is affected by *thoughts* rather than *things*; and only then feels the requisite interest, even for the most important events and accidents, when, by means of meditation, they have passed into thoughts." His sublime apostrophe to Milton, we find it difficult to read, without applying its descriptive character, in part at least, to himself. "My mind is not capable of forming a more august conception, than arises from the contemplation of this great man in his latter days; poor, sick, old, blind, slandered, persecuted,

"Darkness before, and danger's voice behind,"

in an age, in which he was as little understood by the party *for* whom, as by that *against* whom, he had contended; and

among men, *before whom he strode so far, as to dwarf himself by the distance*, yet still listening to the music of his own thoughts, or if additionally cheered, yet cheered only by the prophetic faith of two or three solitary individuals, he did nevertheless

——— “ Argue not
Against Heaven’s hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope ; but still bore up, and steered
Right onward.”

For himself Coleridge never desired notoriety, and indeed was averse from it. In how admirable a manner does he speak of the fatal influence of the passion for distinction, — “the desire of *distinguishing* yourself *from* other men in order to be distinguished *by* them. Hoc reverâ est *inter te et veritatem*. This interest does indeed stand between thee and truth. I might add, between thee and thy own soul. It is scarcely more at variance with the love of truth, than it is unfriendly to the attainment that deserves that name. By your own act, you have appointed the many as your judges and appraisers ; for the anxiety to be admired is a loveless passion, ever strongest with regard to those by whom we are least known and least cared for, loud on the Hustings, gay in the Ball-room, mute and sullen at the family Fireside.”

There are some minds of so noble an order, that we would almost say humility seems natural to them. Burke’s was such a mind. Kindred in its character was that of Coleridge. To intellectual he added true christian humility. He never affected greatness ; it was inseparable from the exercise of such an intellect as God had given him. He was chargeable indeed, with a “too careless indifference to public opinion, and to the attacks of those who influence it ;” praise and admiration being little desirable to him, except as marks of sympathy. It is truly affecting to peruse his own remarks on this subject, at the close of the chapter in the *Biographia Literaria*, on the supposed irritability of men of genius, and the causes, occasions, and injustice of the charge ; a chapter worthy of meditative study and admiration. “Indignation at literary wrongs,” says he, “I leave to men born under happier stars, I cannot *afford* it. . . . I have laid too many eggs in the hot sands of this wilderness, the world, with ostrich carelessness and ostrich oblivion. The greater part, indeed, have been trodden under

foot and are forgotten ; but yet no small number have crept forth into life, some to furnish feathers for the caps of others, and still more to plume the shafts in the quivers of my enemies ; of them that, unprovoked, have lain in wait against my soul."

" Sic vos, non vobis mellificatis, apes ! "

We earnestly hope that some one of his friends in England may collect these scattered and neglected fruits of his mind, together with the essays published in the *Morning Post* and *Courier*, and give them to the world.

It is now, less than formerly, the lot of such minds to be criticised by men, " whose intellectual claims to the guardianship of the muses seem, from the greater part, analogous to the physical qualifications, which adapt their oriental brethren for the superintendence of the harem." Few have had more to endure, or borne it with humbler patience of endurance, than this great man, from the sciolism, the impudence, and the malice of anonymous criticism. With a severity the more powerful, because so calm and lofty, he has cauterized the then prevailing style of quackery in criticism in the third chapter of the *Biographia Literaria*, in which he has vindicated Southey's " fixed and well-earned fame," from the abuse and indefatigable hostility of his anonymous critics, and recorded his own admiration of his friend, in a tribute of beautiful and heartfelt praise, only to be equalled for its sweetness, good sense, and power of discrimination, by his own more elaborate and detailed criticism upon the poet Wordsworth. What he said of Southey in the closing sentence of this chapter, might be applied with equal felicity to himself, " that quacks in education, quacks in politics, and quacks in criticism were his only enemies."

One of the noblest traits in the character of Coleridge was his delight to discover, and readiness to acknowledge ability and excellence in others. This feature was combined at the same time with that humility in the appreciation of his own powers, which led him to underrate himself in the comparison. In how noble a manner does he speak of Paley's excellence of language and simplicity of style, and of his own unwillingness to write the severe criticism, which yet a sense of justice demanded, upon Paley's erroneous system. " O, if I were fond and ambitious of literary honor, of public applause, how well

content should I be to excite but one third of the admiration, which, in my inmost being, I feel for the head and heart of Paley ! And how gladly would I surrender all hope of contemporary praise, could I even approach to the incomparable grace, propriety, and persuasive facility of his writings ! But on this very account I believe myself bound in conscience to throw the whole force of my intellect in the way of this triumphal car, on which the tutelary genius of modern idolatry is borne, even at the risk of being crushed under the wheels !”

The tenth chapter of the *Biographia Literaria*, (a work to which we always recur with renewed benefit and delight) is full of autobiographical interest. For mingled humor, and pathos, wit, good sense, and nobleness, and affectionateness of feeling, it is unsurpassed in the annals of biography. It contains a humorous history of his sufferings at the outset of his authorship, when, though a poor man, he was, as he expresses himself, “so completely hag-ridden by the fear of being influenced by selfish motives, that to know a mode of conduct to be the dictate of *prudence* was a sort of presumptive proof to my feelings, that the contrary was the dictate of *duty*.” He gives the most amusing account of his campaign for subscribers to the “*Watchman*,” and it is one of the greatest curiosities in the history of genius. He says, in concluding the account of the periodical, “I should have been inevitably thrown into jail by my British printer, who refused to wait, even for a month, for a sum between eighty and ninety pounds, if the money had not been paid for me by a man by no means affluent, a dear friend, who attached himself to me from my first arrival at Bristol, who has continued my friend with a fidelity unconquered by time, or even by my own apparent neglect ; a friend, from whom I never received an advice that was not wise, or a remonstrance that was not gentle and affectionate.”

During his retirement in Somersetshire, his mind seems to have experienced a mighty revolution on the great subjects of religion and philosophy. To the foundations of religion and morals he devoted his thoughts and studies ; but, in his own expression, “found himself all afloat. Doubts rushed in ; broke upon me *from the fountains of the great deep*, and fell *from the windows of heaven*. The fontal truths of natural religion, and the books of Revelation, alike contributed to the flood ; and it was long ere my ark touched on an Ararat, and

rested." When it did rest, it was first in a speculative, but afterwards a heartfelt, experimental faith, in the doctrines of the gospel, and a spiritual philosophy shining in its light.

"While my mind was thus perplexed," he says, "by a gracious providence, for which I can never be sufficiently grateful, the generous and munificent patronage of Mr. Josiah, and Mr. Thomas Wedgewood, enabled me to finish my education in Germany. I made the best use of my time and means; and there is, therefore, no period of my life, on which I can look back with such unmingled satisfaction." He gives a noble outline of his almost Encyclopedic studies in that country of hard students and learned men.

This instructive and interesting chapter concludes with a strain of wounded but noble feelings in reference to the charge of idleness. "My severest critics have not pretended to have found, in my compositions, triviality, or traces of a mind that shrunk from the toil of thinking. No one has charged me with tricking out in other words the thoughts of others, or with hashing up anew the *crambe jam decies coctam* of English literature or philosophy. Seldom have I written that in a day, the acquisition or investigation of which had not cost me the previous labor of a month."

It may be remarked as a great proof of genius, when the productions of the mind are impressed with the character of the author. A man of the highest genius, in communicating his thoughts, communicates himself; opens his heart; leaves the impress of his *feelings* in his works. Observe this beautiful trait in Burke. The best biographer in the world could scarcely, by the happiest or most minute delineation, give us a more perfect idea of Burke's character as a whole, than we can gain by the perusal of his own volumes. It is this trait that gives a deeper interest, (and far more precious, for it is a moral interest,) than the highest degree of mere intellectual power can confer. It links the being of the reader not merely in admiration, but in fervent attachment to the genius of the author. Thus it is that Coleridge's sweet, affectionate, and noble feelings, always encircling and mingling with the movements of his great mind, (even as the melody of music in a majestic anthem pervades the soul of the poetry, and heightens and completes its power,) have won for him, as a man, a fervor of attachment unexampled, in the hearts of those who most admire the productions of his genius.

And yet, we cannot contemplate his character, nor read a page of his works without a melancholy feeling. It is a melancholy not unlike that which we experience, in perusing those portions of the works of Burke, that were written after the death of his beloved son. The sorrows of a father's almost broken heart have tinged every line; the pages are hallowed with the sacredness of his affliction. The sorrows of Coleridge were both from inward and outward sources, but more from inward; a noble mind preying on itself. He was a being, whose extraordinary qualities of intellect and heart, the evil times on which he had fallen could not appreciate. Moreover, his sensibilities were all too keen for the body in which he was imprisoned, and the world by which he was surrounded. Years of pain, bodily and mental, were his to endure, aggravated, with bitterness inexpressible, by the sense of inability to realize the ideals of intellectual performance he was always contemplating; a feeling of regret, it may be of remorse, in the conviction of the vast disproportion between his great powers of mind, and any image of them in his actual works; besides, a constant struggle to bear up against the mechanical and material spirit of the age; disappointment, not of ambition, but of a wounded spirit; sickness of heart for the hollowness of friendly profession; straitened circumstances, and perhaps more than all, domestic affliction, compelling him, it may be, to take refuge from too bitter a sense of it, by "delving in the unwholesome mines of metaphysic depths." "I have sought a refuge," says he, "from bodily pain and mismanaged sensibility, in abstruse researches, which exercised the strength and subtlety of the understanding, without awakening the feelings of the heart." He bore all his sorrows, and especially the anguish of the last months of life, with sweetness of address and tranquillity of spirit. Would that those, who have spoken and written so freely against him, had power to appreciate, and nobleness of disposition to acknowledge, the moral worth of his feelings and his labors!

His own language, in his own poetry, can alone describe his feelings. The following passage is from his *Ode on Dejection*.

"There was a time when, though my path was rough,
This joy within me dallied with distress,
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff,
Whence fancy made me dreams of happiness:
For hope grew round me like the twining vine,

And fruits and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.
But now afflictions bow me down to earth,
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth. —
But oh ! each visitation
Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of Imagination.
For not to *think* of what I needs must *feel*,
But to be still and patient, all I can ;
And haply by abstruse research to steal
From my own nature all the natural man,
This was my sole resource, my only plan ;
Till that, which suits a part, infects the whole,
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul."

How affecting is this expression of his own sense of the influence which metaphysical employments, long pursued, had exerted over his poetical genius. If, however, we might judge from his latest poetry, his metaphysical studies through life must have rather increased than lessened the power of his imagination.

The recitation of Wordsworth's Poem on the growth of an individual mind, of which gift to his race we possess as yet a portion only, in the volume entitled *The Excursion*, (that portion in itself a noble whole,) seems to have wakened up in Coleridge's being a powerful consciousness of what he himself also was capable of, and strong yearnings after its realization. Evening after evening, that great poet, amidst a circle of dear friends, a "happy vision of beloved faces," poured forth, in the deep and solemn voice with which he recites his own poetry, that "long sustained song." Coleridge describes it with unequalled power of beauty.

"Eve following eve,
Dear, tranquil time, when the sweet sense of Home
Is sweetest ! moments for their own sake hailed,
And more desired, more precious for thy song,
In silence listening, like a devout child,
My soul lay passive, by the various strain
Driven, as in surges now beneath the stars,
With momentary stars of my own birth,
Fair, constellated foam, still darting off
Into the darkness ; now a tranquil sea,
Outspread and bright, yet swelling to the moon."

The night after the close of this recitation, he composed (addressing it to Wordsworth) one of the finest among his

own "Meditative Poems," from which the passage extracted above is taken. In it there occur the following lines, in which he gave utterance to "the voice of moaning" over his own long silent genius. They express not only his own feelings, weeping over himself, in the consciousness of what perhaps he ought to have performed, permanent, and of ever-enduring influence; but the feelings of others for him, beholding, in all that he has accomplished, so vivid proofs of that, far greater, which yet he might have realized, and placed "among the archives of mankind."

"Ah! as I listened with a heart forlorn,
The pulses of my being beat anew;
And even as life returns upon the drown'd,
Life's joy, rekindling, roused a throng of pains, —
Keen pangs of love, awakening as a babe
Turbulent, with an outcry in the heart;
And fears self-willed, that shunned the eye of Hope;
And Hope, that scarce would know itself from Fear;
Sense of past youth, and manhood come in vain,
And genius given, and knowledge won in vain;
And all which I had culled in woodwalks wild,
And all which patient toil had reared, and all,
Commune with *thee* had opened out, — but flowers,
Strew'd on my corse, and borne upon my bier,
In the same coffin, for the self-same grave!"

We have spoken of his sorrows, and of the manner in which he endured them. His heart was full of tenderness to those who loved him, and forgiveness to those, who, without provocation, (unless kindness and good deeds be such,) were his enemies; nor could there be found, anywhere in English literature, expressions of nobler feeling towards his slanderers, or of truer gratitude to his friends. For the reputation of these, he sought with the earnestness of self-oblivion; a generosity sometimes painfully returned by passiveness on their part, when his own character was at stake. "Think only," says he, "what your feelings would be, if you heard a wretch deliberately perjure himself in support of an infamous accusation, so remote from all fact, so smooth and homogeneous in its untruth, such a *round robin* of mere lies, that you knew not which to begin with? What could you do, but look round with horror and astonishment, pleading silently to human nature itself, — and, perhaps, (*as hath really been the case with me,*)

forget both the slanderer and his slander, in the anguish inflicted by the passiveness of your many professed friends, whose characters you had ever been as eager to clear from the least stain of reproach, as if a coal of fire had been on your own skin?"

To the delineation of Wordsworth's excellencies, he devoted the greater part of the second volume of the *Biographia Literaria*, in an essay, which will remain a master-piece of philosophical criticism, coeval with the English language. Of another friend and benefactor, he has given a character in one of the essays in the first volume of *The Friend*, written in all the beauty of eloquence, from the inmost heart of the poet and philosopher. He speaks of his virtues, "themes for the energies of solitude, for the awfulness of prayer! — virtues, exercised in the barrenness and desolation of his animal being; while he thirsted, with the full stream at his lips, and yet with unwearied goodness poured out to all around him, like the master of a feast among his kindred, in the day of his own gladness! Were it but for the remembrance of him alone, and of his lot here below, the disbelief of a future state would sadden the earth around me, and blight the very grass in the field." Again, in one of the letters of his "Literary Correspondence," having alluded to the sufferings of his friend, and the scientific meditations to which he was led while enduring them, he dwells in a passage, exquisite for its beauty, not less than for its profound philosophic thought, upon the influence of ill-health and pain in eliciting genius. We extract the following sentences, as a specimen of his power of illustrating truth from scientific phenomena. "The cutting and irritating grain of sand, which by accident or incaution has got within the shell, incites the living inmate to secrete from its own resources, the means of coating the intrusive substance. And is it not, or may it not be, even so, with the irregularities and unevenness of health and fortune in our own case? We too may turn diseases into pearls. The means and materials are within ourselves; and the process is easily understood." "That this source of consolation and support may be equally in your power as in mine, but that you may never have occasion to *feel* equally grateful for it, *as I have and do, in body and estate*, is the fervent wish of your affectionate

S. T. COLERIDGE."

The volumes of *The Friend*, (published as one in this coun-

try,) are every way worthy of Coleridge's great intellect; whether for the development of important principles in political, ethical, psychological science; or for eloquence of feeling, sentiment, and thought; or for philosophic and poetic beauty of style and illustration. The work is a FRIEND indeed, and to the young above all others; venerable, yet familiar; thoughtful, and of kindest, noblest feelings; teaching wisdom for meditation, and alluring to habits of meditation, by presenting to the mind, not amusement merely, but

——— Flowers

Of sober tint, and herbs of medicinal powers;

admonitory of dangerous influences, and alluring to the love of every thing good and honorable; taking the reader affectionately by the hand, and with most happy and instructive conversation to beguile the weariness of the way, leading him gradually upward to the very highest principles of speculative science.

Were we to point out the essays most worthy to be earnestly and profoundly studied, it would be those in the third volume, on the "Principles of Method common to all Investigations; presented as the basis of his future philosophical and theological writings, and as the necessary introduction to the same." We do not believe, that in the whole compass of English, French, or German literature, there is to be witnessed so profound an exhibition of the ultimate principles of universal science; the principles, by which alone "philosophy becomes scientific, and the sciences philosophical." As a work, *The Friend* abounds likewise with passages of great descriptive beauty, exquisite delineations of character, and striking truths, such as are scattered, indeed, through all his pages, obtained from the thoughtful study of human nature and human life. Aphoristic sentences, that condense volumes of meaning, arrest the attention of the contemplative reader, as fixed stars in his hemisphere of moral truth. The remark on page twenty-eighth, of the American edition, respecting the disproportion of human passions to their ordinary objects, being among the strongest internal evidences of our future destination, is a principle on which a mind like Bishop Butler's, might erect a work analogous to the *ANALOGY*. Another remark, a little farther onward, contains in itself the history of the corruptions of Christianity. So with the following remark on the same

page, in regard to the sacrifice of truth and expediency. "The duties which we owe to our own moral being, are the ground and condition of all other duties; and to set our nature at strife with itself for a good purpose, implies the same sort of prudence, as a priest of Diana would have manifested, who should have proposed to dig up the celebrated charcoal foundations of the mighty temple of Ephesus, in order to furnish fuel for the burnt offerings on its altars." As an instance of great conciseness and comprehension in one and the same thought, embodying truth from history, take the following. "The Christian world was for centuries divided into the many, that did not think at all, and the few, who did nothing but *think*, — both alike *unreflecting*, the one from defect of the *act*, the other from the absence of an *object*." How truly magnificent is the following sentence in regard to the Bible: "It is God every where; and all creatures conform to his decrees, the righteous by performance of the law, the disobedient by the sufferance of the penalty." His power of definition is not less remarkable for the characteristics of comprehension in conciseness, and accuracy in universality.

The political essays in *The Friend*, (though not possessing the general interest of those, for instance, which contain his delightful sketches of the character of Luther, and his explanation, on psychological principles, of Luther's satanic apparition, in the place of his imprisonment at the Warteburg,) are yet replete with wisdom. Here, too, principles give value and permanence to facts, and history is adduced to illustrate principles; and over all are thrown the light and warmth of moral purity and nobleness of feeling. In one of these pages he makes a remark, (which we have heard quoted as a proof of want of common sense and judgment,) viz. that as to England's "political strength and circumstantial prosperity, it is the national debt, which has wedded in indissoluble union all the interests of the state, the landed with the commercial, and the man of independent fortune with the stirring tradesman, and reposing annuitant." We have no doubt of the main truth of this remark; his own reasoning makes it clear; though he promises afterwards to develope, with the same boldness, the injurious effects of the system on the literature, morals, and religious principles of the people. Paradoxical as it may seem, to assert that in any case debt is benefit and strength, we believe that the national debt of England, in

its amazing pressure of the kingdom, whose interests it nevertheless unites and consolidates by that pressure, may be compared to the key-stone of an immense arch, itself supported by those sides of the arch, which yet themselves would fall to pieces, but for the pressure of the weight they are required to sustain.

Mr. Coleridge's aim, in all movements of his mind, was towards general principles. In regard to *The Friend*, he says, "To refer men's opinions to their absolute principles, and thence their feelings to their appropriate objects, and in their due degrees; and finally, to apply the principles thus ascertained, to the formation of steadfast convictions, concerning the most important questions of politics, morality, and religion, — these are to be the objects and contents of this work." These, it may be said, are the objects and contents of all his works, and of all his philosophy; "having myself, (he says.) experienced, that no delight, either in kind or degree, was equal to that which accompanies the distinct perception of a fundamental truth, relative to our moral being; having, long after the completion of what is ordinarily called a learned education, discovered a new world of intellectual profit opening on me; not from any new opinions, but lying, as it were, at the roots of those, which I had been taught from childhood, in my catechism and spelling-book."

It is to principles, that he always directs us, without which, our knowledge, though varied as the forms of the visible and invisible creation, is little better than chaos; "the depthless abstractions of fleeting phenomena, the shadows of sailing vapors, the colorless repetitions of rainbows;" without which, "experience itself is but a Cyclops, walking backwards, under the fascination of the past," — "without which, the fleeting chaos of facts would no more form experience, than the dust of the grave can of itself make a living man;" without which history is fable, philosophy a formless kaleidoscope, poetry without life, and books without permanence.

It is to the presence of these, that the works of Edmund Burke owe their endurance and amazing power. "He possessed," says Coleridge, "and had sedulously sharpened, that eye which sees all things, actions, and events, in relation to the laws that determine their existence, and circumscribe their possibility. He referred habitually to *principles*. He was a *scientific* statesman; and, therefore, a *seer*. For every *prin-*

ciple contains in itself the germs of a prophecy ; and as the prophetic power is the essential privilege of science, so the fulfilment of its oracles supplies the outward, and, to men in general, the *only* test of its claim to the title." Of Burke, he made a remark, which we cannot but quote ; that, "in his public character he found himself, as it were, in a Noah's ark, with a very few men, and a great many beasts."

It is to the pursuit of principle, instead of temporary notions and fancies, (that have their birth in every age, from the changing humors and movements of society, and in every age attract and waste the intellectual and moral strength of multitudes,) that the scholars and great men of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries owe the perpetuity of their fame, and the fact that *their works do follow them*. And it is to be greatly feared, that, for want of an excitement produced by the presence and pursuit of ultimate principles, the character of our own age will become more and more superficial, money-making, and self-complacent ; and that, even "amidst the vicesant intellectual activity of the race, the intellectual power of individual minds may be falling off ; and amidst accumulating knowledge, lofty science may disappear."

"We are fond, (says Mr. Coleridge) of styling our own the *enlightened* age ; though, as Jortin, I think, has wittily remarked, the *golden* age would be more appropriate." And are we not proud of our very defects, and yet not willing to acknowledge them ? Ours is an age, it is true, of useful inventions ; of steam-engines, and rail-roads, and libraries of useful and entertaining knowledge. But wisdom has sadly gone out of fashion ; and ours is an age of sense, in opposition to an age of spirit ; an age of *common* sense, in which all things and knowledges are *sensualized* to all. The speculative reason is forgotten in the enthronement of the practical understanding of man ; and where this is the case, there is neither insight, nor veneration for things venerable, nor fixed opinions, nor steadfast thought, nor spiritual yearnings, nor deep consciousness, nor humble acknowledgment of spiritual wants. The employments that occupy man as a creature of the mere understanding, are multiplied, and the world is a vast hive of buzzing intelligences as busy as the bees, and as intent upon external or physical pursuits as they, to the exclusion of all spiritual concerns.

Criticism, with Coleridge, was a great science, and perhaps he is the first English critic, who has scientifically pursued it. Possessing a philosophic power of discernment in the observance of mental laws, and in the application of those laws to the productions of genius, and connecting the science of the beautiful in all its forms with those psychological and moral principles, of which in truth it is but the expression, he pours a placid light around him, as different from the indiscriminating glimmer of common criticism as the calm and solemn sunlight of noonday, revealing all things as they are, is different from the flickering torch-light. He tells us, himself, that he "labored at a solid foundation, on which permanently to ground his opinions in the component faculties of the human mind itself, and their comparative dignity and importance." He has stated the two following critical aphorisms, abstracted from his reading and meditation at an early age, and certainly important; "first, that not the poem which we have *read*, but that to which we *return*, with the greatest pleasure, possesses the genuine power, and claims the name of *essential poetry*. Second, that whatever lines can be translated into other words of the same language, without diminution of their significance, either in sense or association, or in any worthy feeling, are so far vicious in their diction."

In expressing his judgment on any work, he was guided by great integrity of moral principle. "It is hardly possible (he says) for a man of ingenuous mind to act under the fear that he shall be suspected, by honest men, of the vileness of praising a work to the public, merely because he happens to be personally acquainted with the author. I judge of all works indifferently, by certain fixed rules, previously formed in my mind, with all the power and vigilance of my judgment." We have referred, as an example of his power, to that grand critical essay upon Wordsworth, in the *Biographia Literaria*; nothing of so great excellence, or such a model in that department of literature, can be found in the language. There is likewise an essay in the second section of the third volume of *The Friend*, in which he illustrates his subject by quotations from Shakspeare, especially from Hamlet, in a strain of critical remark, so profoundly philosophical, so clear and vigorous, and producing in the mind so strong a sense of Shakspeare's judgment and intellectual greatness, as makes the reader earnestly wish that what is incidental illustration of scientific principles, tested by

application to the works of that great Poet, had been itself extended to a volume. The critical remarks, in the first chapter of the *Biographia Literaria*, on the writers of the last century, including Mr. Pope and his followers, (whom he characterizes, with great accuracy, as "the school of French poetry, condensed and invigorated by English understanding,") are equally admirable. He discloses the nature of the "painted mists that occasionally rise from the marshes at the foot of Parnassus." "Our genuine admiration of a great poet, is a continuous *undercurrent* of feeling; it is every where present, but seldom any where as a separate excitement." Again, he makes an observation, which we may apply to the poetry of Wordsworth, for illustration, that "it is peculiar to original genius to become less and less *striking*, in proportion to its success in improving the taste and judgment of its contemporaries."

Coleridge's power of illustration, in his prose writings, was such as might be expected in so great a poet, working with unlimited command of such inexhaustible materials of learning and science. All things actual and imaginable in the universe of knowledge, the sciences, natural and exact, the fine arts, and the common business of life, he lays under contribution, and yokes the spoils, in endless reach and variety, to his imagination, as to a triumphal car. Perhaps in no other created mind but Plato's, were the powers of imagination and abstraction ever united in so remarkable a degree. Images, the growth of his poetic genius, are seen, amidst abstrusest subtleties, springing lovelier than ever on the perilous, barren heights of metaphysical speculations; even as the flowers, that, sometimes of rarest beauty, and as it were, conscious and rejoicing in their place of danger, bend over the crags of a mighty waterfall, and wet their petals, and mingle their fragrance with the spray.

His imagination might be named omnipresent in all forms of his intellectual existence; there being no power, in whose exercise the influence of that divine faculty was not duly mingled. Thought, meditation, reasoning, argument, abstract definition and criticism, are all surrounded by that radiance. All things have grown in that light. His language is imbued with it. Even in metaphysical abstractions we are conscious of its power. Its influence on the medium of thought might be illustrated by the painted glass in old cathedrals. It is a religious

light, full of solemnity, and sombre magnificence. His very words are pictures.

Yet this sublime faculty, which, bestowed in such abundant measure, generally usurps possession of the mind, instead of being possessed by it, with him was under perfect control, moving obedient to the severest judgment, and as a ministering spirit to his strong reasoning powers. Hence his figures are always natural, however unusual. They are part and parcel of the thought itself, and the legitimate result of energetic action in the intellect ; *rubor quidem natus, et incalescentia genuina* ; the glow of blood upon the cheek, produced by powerful, but healthy, excitement in the heart.

All the treasures of his immense knowledge were fused in the fire of his genius, and became transparencies, through which the light of his imagination shone, encompassing the figures with attractive splendor, and setting them in a fiery glow. In metaphysical researches it places the thought in such distinctness, that we think of the moon setting behind the trees, and putting every leaf and twig in a burning blaze of crimson and gold. But it is almost presumptuous to use an illustration, which has been consecrated, as it were, with glory, in Wordsworth's grandest, happiest manner. Let us read the passage, for it worthily describes the actings of Coleridge's imagination.

“ Within the soul a faculty abides,
That with interpositions, which would hide
And darken, so can deal, that they become
Contingencies of pomp ; and serve to exalt
Her native brightness. As the ample moon,
In the deep stillness of a summer even,
Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,
Burns like an unconsuming fire of light,
In the green trees ; and, kindling on all sides
Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil
Into a substance glorious as her own,
Yea, with her own incorporated, by power
Capacious and serene.”

It is truly surprising to witness, in many of Coleridge's illustrations, his accurate acquaintance with the exact and natural sciences. He loves especially to illustrate psychological by geometrical science. It is so with all the sciences. He is at home, and what is more, he dwells among the *principles* of each, worshipping, not in the porch, but in the inner sanctuary

of the temple. Open his works where you will, the mind cannot long remain there, without being aroused into admiration and excitement. There are great forms around it ; countenances sublime and awful ; inscriptions of dread import ; furniture and imagery, that seem the work of supernatural presences for themselves.

The same may be said of his conversation, which might almost be called the world's wonder, so universally has the fame of its splendor spread. To have enjoyed a day's familiar intercourse with such a mind, would have been worth a voyage across the Atlantic.

It has been finely said of Dr. Payson's conversation, that " his thoughts flew from him in every possible variety of beauty and harmony, like birds from a South American Forest." This might describe the movements of the *fancy* in Coleridge's conversation, but would be an utterly inadequate image of its amazing richness, grandeur and philosophic and imaginative power. And yet it was the spontaneous overflow of the mind, without effort, without rest, poured out wherever he found a human ear to listen. To him it seemed quite indifferent who should be the recipient of so much intellectual richness ; he talked not to display that richness, but to communicate thought, and to give play to a mind as restless in its thoughts, as the ocean in the movement of its tides.

His countenance, while engaged in thought, we have been told was the most vivid image of abstraction conceivable. It seemed as if the soul, the whole principle of life and intelligence had withdrawn, for the time, from the outer man, to a hidden world within ; and the face would be a perfect blank, almost a picture of idiocy. Then, on opening his lips in conversation, suddenly the fire would leap back into his eye, and the soul into every feature. It was like a resurrection. It was like the sun, rising abruptly from beneath the sea, to shine upon the waste of waters. Nothing could be more diverse, than these two countenances of the visible and invisible soul.

His power of condensing a world of meaning in one word, and flashing it upon the hearer's sense, has been spoken of as possessed, if possible, to a greater degree in conversation than in writing. He once said, speaking of the difference between the two styles of architecture, that the Grecian architecture was a *thing*, — the Gothic an *IDEA*.

Both in speaking and writing, he was a consummate master

of language. No assertion could be more groundless, than the one, so oft repeated, of vagueness and mysticism in his style. The crude classification of his mind with that of Chalmers, by a writer in this country, is proof of the inaccurate and vague conceptions entertained in regard both to his genius and style, by those from whom a juster appreciation might have been expected. For no two authors could be more diverse, in their modes of thinking and expression, and in the whole character of their minds. If any qualities are distinctive in the intellect of Coleridge, they are, not only comprehensiveness, but acuteness and severity of thought, and accuracy and purity in the use of language. As his thoughts have no indistinctness, his language has no hiding-places. Here are neither mental waverings, nor half-meanings, nor indefinite phrases; neither are there iterations of familiar truth tricked out in the finery of words or epithets. He never resorts to such stratagems. His language is so severe and scientific, that nothing but original and strong thought can move in it. An indefinite mind would be in it as a blind child in the armor of invincible knights of old.

Sometimes he uses language with almost algebraic conciseness; so that his words and phrases partake so much of the condensation of his thoughts, that they appear like hieroglyphics. In general, it would be difficult for any one, the greatest master of English, to put any specified thought, which Mr. Coleridge has committed to writing, into smaller compass, with equal distinctness, or into broader space, without loss of power. Nor are the qualities of conciseness and accuracy inconsistent with that poetical richness, which distinguishes his style; the union of the imaginative and scientific, though very rare, being nevertheless but the natural union of poetry and philosophy.

He was not only accurate himself in the use of language; there is no writer, who so powerfully impresses on the reader's mind the importance of such accuracy, or awakes it to so watchful an examination both of the etymology and meaning of words. In many instances he has himself shown how much may be gained by this habit; it is giving to the mind a new thought; or rather re-linking the word to that thought, of which, in common use, it has ceased to be the exponent. It is like exchanging a worn-out coin, for one just struck from the mint. He has spoken, in one of his letters, of the remedy for confusion of thought, "to be provided by a dictionary, constructed on the one only philosophical principle, which re-

garding words as living growths, offsets, and organs of the human soul, seeks to trace each historically, through all the periods of its natural growth, and accidental modifications. A work which, executed for any one language, would yet be a benefaction to the world, and to the nation itself a source of immediate honor and of ultimate *weal*, beyond the power of victories to bestow, or the mines of Mexico to purchase. The realization of this scheme lies in the far distance; but in the meantime, it cannot but beseech every individual competent to its furtherance, to contribute a small portion of the materials for the future temple, — from a polished column to a hewn stone, or a plank for the scaffolding; and, as they come in, to erect with them sheds for the workmen, and temporary structures for present use."

His own essay on the philosophic import of the words *object* and *subject*, is a noble example of what may be done in this way. "There are cases (says he in one of his notes) in which more knowledge of more value may be conveyed by the history of a word, than by the history of a campaign. We have only to master the true origin and original import of any native and abiding word, to find in it, if not the *solution* of the facts expressed by it, yet a finger-mark, pointing to the road, on which this solution is to be sought for." He was himself an enthusiastic lover, and a profound master, of the greatest of all languages, the Greek; and not unfrequently does he throw a great light of illustration over his subject, from that particular language, as well as from the laws of universal grammar. Surely it would have been an anomaly, hard to be accounted for, if a mind, philosophic as his, and so disciplined, both in his school-days, and in all after life, had been loose or inaccurate in the use of his own mother tongue!

The clearness with which the thought lies in his own mind, he communicates in its expression, to all who will bestow the requisite attention; and so he does the fullness of conviction, almost inducing the acquiescence of his readers, by the mere force of united strength and integrity, with which he utters a proposition. However mysterious his language, (ourselves unaccustomed to the subjects, and for that reason finding mystery in the language,) we are evidently in the presence of a man, who is not beating the air; of a powerful intellect, that is not exerting itself among mists or absurdities, or walking

blind-fold over regions where he has never been before. Whatever subject he is investigating, he does it as one who knows every step of the ground, and is conscious of, and properly confident in his own strength. Moreover, we see from his tread that it is *solid* ground ; the distant beholder may have thought it an unstable marsh, but he strides over it with the heavy tramp of a war-horse ; moving neither irresolutely, nor uncertain of his end, but as to a definite point, which he sees full before him, and is vigorous enough to attain. Whatever may be said of Coleridge's difficulty to be understood by others, it is at least evident that he understands himself.

What then are the grounds of alleged obscurity ? They lie partly in the difficulty of the subject, and its remoteness from common consciousness ; but more, we believe, in the mind of the reader. Coleridge generally takes for granted a greater degree of knowledge in that mind, than is actually there. Consequently, he makes a demand upon it, himself supplying only the necessary links in the argument. Some, who find him obscure, do so, because they have not studied him, nor become accustomed, either to his scientific use of language, or his abstract manner of elucidating principles ; others, because they are not willing, or have not leisure, to satisfy the demand for thought and fixed attention, which he makes upon the mind. Campbell has said of the poet Collins, that "a cloud of obscurity sometimes rests on his highest conceptions, arising from the fierceness of his associations, and the daring sweep of his allusions ; but the shadow is transitory, and interferes very little with the light of his imagery, or the warmth of his feelings." Something analogous may be said of Coleridge's metaphysical speculations.

If any person from defect of mental discipline be unable, or from dislike of mental labor be unwilling, to take those steps, which the author has not taken for him, though it may be a *convenient* way to dispose of the difficulty, it is surely not the most *honorable* in the reader, to transfer what is the fault either of his own mind or heart, to the score of an alleged fault in the writer. A youthful student, at least, we should suppose, with the remembrance of Coleridge's venerable age and profound learning, would rather, if an opinion expressed must necessarily involve the assertion of unintelligibility, preserve a modest silence. A mind sufficiently disciplined to appreciate Coleridge's intellectual power, or sufficiently elevated

to enter into his nobleness of feeling ; a mind that, amidst the scoffing habit of the age, has not lost all veneration for genius in another, or humility in view of limited attainment in itself, would rather not be found pronouncing the pages of such a man, confusion and absurdity. The very declaration involves an opinion, that the individual who makes it *understands his author's ignorance*. We would rather adopt the admirable language of Coleridge himself, in regard to those parts of Plato, to which, after long study, he confesses himself unable to attach any consistent meaning, and acknowledge, that instead of *understanding his ignorance*, we are IGNORANT OF HIS UNDERSTANDING.

“ Metaphysical systems for the most part become popular, not for their truth, but in proportion as they attribute to causes a susceptibility of being *seen*, if only our visual organs were sufficiently powerful.” This being the case, it is very natural that his own speculations should be branded as obscure, for his philosophy is at war with all that is sensual, and he is the great and venerable defender of that which is spiritual in man, in opposition to all materializing systems. From the empirical decisions of those who have ruled in the last age, he appeals continually to first principles, and reasons from them with the accuracy and power of geometrical science. And his illustrations of metaphysical truth are often so purely scientific, that, while nothing could be better adapted to make his meaning sensibly clear to a scientific mind, the illustrations themselves, in order to be fully comprehended, demand not a little discipline in the exact sciences. He has, in truth, occupied those heights in psychological science, which few have leisure, and still fewer the ability, and fewer still the patience, to scale. There, from that great elevation, which no other contemporary mind has reached, and in an intellectual atmosphere so thin and rarefied, that hardly another could sustain, he is occupied in the clear beholding of abstrusest truth. He describes the wondrous prospect, as it spreads out before his own soul, but with such exact language, and such discrimination, as few can follow, whose mental discipline has lain in an age of indistinctness and materiality ; so that, although with the power of a strong imagination he vividly illustrates the abstractest principle, almost painting to the senses, what is difficult ever for the mind to hold in contemplation, there is but here and there an individual

who fully comprehends him, and very many are content to put away the subject with the assertion, that in fact he is unintelligible. Should the mass of readers, who are ignorant of the higher branches of the mathematics, reason thus of the *Mécanique Céleste*, (and perhaps some of Coleridge's metaphysical investigations occupy a position in psychological science, analogous to that which the work of La Place occupies in mathematical,) the contemptuous obstinacy of such ignorance would be noticeable only to be despised. It is not so much, however, the *ignorance* of this age on psychological subjects, of which a mind like Coleridge's has reason to complain, as it is the complacency of assumed wisdom, with which they deny the possibility of any truths in metaphysics, that transcend the intricacies of physical machinery, or lie beyond the comprehension of common sense.

Were it not that the reasonings of Lord Bacon and of Sir Isaac Newton are of the laws of the natural world, and have the advantage of physical, or at least sensible exponents, and thus make by no means so great a demand on the power of abstract contemplation as those of Coleridge, we believe the two former philosophers would as often enjoy the imputation of mystical and unintelligible obscurities as the latter. The psychological philosopher has difficulties to encounter, that are never found in the way of the natural philosopher. The sphere of investigation itself demands higher powers of mind; it is, indeed, the sphere of the pure reason; while that of the external physical sciences is the province of the understanding. It requires a power of continuous thought, without any positions or links of demonstration in external things to rest upon. The milestones on the road beguile the traveller of his weariness; there are none such in metaphysical investigations. In natural science, the mind is led onward, by laws that can be read in external nature; it does not lead, but is conducted by ideas realized, as it were, to the senses. There is a logical connection already marked in the successive steps, that has only to be followed with attention, the last indicating the next. In psychological science the mind must be its own guide; there is no physical world, where its laws are realized to the senses; the soul's being cannot be analyzed like a mineral, nor demonstrated like an algebraic formula, or a geometrical quantity. Upborne with indefatigable wings, the metaphysical philosopher, who does

not materialize his science, and thus place it out of the limits of psychology, must steer through regions of abstractions in the infinitude of being, where there are no external diagrams or resting-places, and where contemplation only can supply a guide.

Then, too, when we consider the amazing difficulties to be encountered in the absence of an adequate philosophical language; the sensualized condition of language itself, and its want of precision in subtle distinctions of abstract thought; it can be no longer wonderful, that when a writer undertakes to go back to the common consciousness of men on metaphysical subjects, they should turn from his speculations with dislike. Little reflection is needed to acquiesce in a system, which merely watches and reports the operation of the human faculties, but that which searches out the *grounds* of those operations, and ascends upward to principles, must of necessity be intricate and difficult to be pursued. Coleridge has given the following translation from Plato, of which he says, "the fidelity of the version may well atone for its harshness, in a passage, that deserves a meditation beyond the ministry of words." The passage is this. "One thing is the *hardness to be understood* of the Sophist, and then that of the philosopher. The former, retreating into the obscurity of *that which hath not true being*, and by long intercourse accustomed to the same, is hard to be known on account of the duskiness of the place. But the philosopher, by contemplation of pure reason, evermore approximating to the idea of true being, is by no means easy to be seen, on account of the splendor of that region. For the intellectual eyes of the many flit, and are incapable of looking fixedly toward the godlike."

Here, did our limits permit, we would call the attention of our readers to the deeply interesting fact, that so many of the ripest and most practical scholars, that ever lived, have been Platonists; and we may add, not a few of the holiest men. This fact might well make any student unwilling to yield himself to the fashionable current of ridicule about "Platonic jargon." Have deep scholarship (we may all ask) and habits of accurate investigation, a natural affinity with a vague, mystical, absurd system of philosophy? And is there legitimate relation between a piety like that of Leighton and Henry More, and useless and unintelligible speculation? We do not

believe it ; when we read such an expression of the sentiment of a man like Coleridge, as is to be found in the opening of the twelfth chapter of his *Biographia Literaria*, we feel inclined to say, Let us return to Athens.

Coleridge's principles are clear, whatever of abstruseness there may be in educating them ; nor does he ever fail to present some grand and practically important idea to the view ; and though we may not be able perfectly to trace the steps by which it is evolved, nor recognise in it any resemblance to our previous mental consciousness, yet it fills the eye with its brightness, like a city on a distant hill, seen towards evening in the setting sun, while all the interspace is hid in shade and indistinctness. The city itself may be new and strange to the traveller, and he unacquainted even with its name ; yet there it is, the habitation of many human beings ; the hum of the crowded streets and suburbs floats on the still evening air, and the roofs of its palaces blaze in the parting sunlight, and its gilded spires rise solemnly to heaven. Take, for instance, the thrilling conclusion of the sixth chapter in the *Biographia Literaria*. " This fact, (and it would not be difficult to adduce several of the same kind,) contributes to make it even probable, that all thoughts are in themselves imperishable ; and that, if the intelligent faculty should be rendered more comprehensive, it would require only a different and apportioned organization, *the body celestial* instead of *the body terrestrial*, to bring before every human soul the collective experience of its whole past existence, and this, — this, perchance, is the dread book of judgment, in whose mysterious hieroglyphics every idle word is recorded ! yea, in the very nature of a living spirit, it may be more possible that heaven and earth should pass away, than that a single act, a single thought, should be loosened or lost from that living chain of causes, to all whose links, conscious or unconscious, the free-will, our only absolute *self*, is co-extensive and co-present."

With what power and solemn grandeur do these thoughts, though but an incidental result of the preceding disquisition, rise upon the mind ! Of a lower order, that is, from the nature of the subject not so magnificent, yet both beautiful and instructive, is the close of the seventh chapter in the same work.

Or take the conclusion of the work, sublime perhaps beyond anything which even Coleridge has written, and affecting in-

deed, when in connection with it we peruse that holy apostolic letter to his god-son, the last intellectual effort of his life, concluding as, with prophetic yearning, he had expressed the wish more than eighteen years before.

“O! that with this my personal, as well as my literary life might conclude! the unquenched desire, I mean, not without the consciousness of having earnestly endeavored to kindle young minds, and to guard them against the temptations of scorers, by showing that the scheme of Christianity, as taught in the Liturgy and Homilies of our church, though not discoverable by human reason, is yet in accordance with it; that link follows link by necessary consequence; that religion soars out of the ken of reason, only where the eye of reason has reached its own horizon; and that faith is then but its continuation; even as the day softens away into the sweet twilight, and twilight, hushed and breathless, steals into the darkness. It is night, sacred night! the upraised eye views only the starry heaven, which manifests itself alone; and the outward beholding is fixed on the sparks twinkling in the awful depth, though suns of other worlds, only to preserve the soul steady and collected in its pure *act* of inward adoration to the great I AM, and to the filial word, that re-affirmeth it from eternity to eternity, whose choral echo is the universe.”

“ΘΕΩ ΜΟΝΩ ΔΟΞΑ.”

In this manner does Coleridge's mind travel onward, throwing out its treasures, principles of overawing grandeur, and thoughts of interest and power, mingled perpetually with illusions, that are, even in themselves, both thoughts and principles. It is a solemn triumphal procession all the way. The science of metaphysics loses its barrenness,

Et duræ quercus sudabunt roscida mella;

abstract subtleties appear not as mere skeletons, but clad in attractive flesh, living and breathing. While you are endeavoring, with intensest thought, and in meditative mood, to follow him, as he “goes bounding on his dim and perilous way,” and you suppose no powers at work, but reason with her severest countenance, suddenly the whole landscape is irradiated with the fire of the imagination, and for a time you almost forget the process of reasoning you are to trace, in the glow of delight at this unanticipated and beautiful vision.

There are objects and ideas, “which their very sublimity

renders indefinite, no less than their indefiniteness renders them sublime." Perhaps the very passages, which a critic of the old French school would complacently dispose of, as the thrice distilled essence of sublime nonsense, we should select as evidences of the unequalled power and beauty, with which Coleridge uses language and imagery in conveying the highest truths of philosophy. There is scarce any chapter in all his writings, more eloquent with the majesty of truth and the beauty of poetry, than that included in note C. in the Appendix to the Statesman's Manual. It contains a powerful description of the prurient, bustling, revolutionary spirit of French wisdom, then gone out over the civilized world, and become the spirit and character of the modern age. From the recommendation of the word of God, as the end and centre of all our studies and meditations, it passes to another book, likewise a revelation from God, the great book of his servant nature. And seldom in one and the same passage are to be witnessed such evidences of clear and profound insight, unlimited mastery over language, grandeur of imagination, and affectionate tenderness of heart.

The notion, that the true system of philosophy must necessarily be so simple, as to commend itself at first sight to the understanding of all men without dispute, or to preclude the necessity of study in the intervention of things hard to be understood, is contrary to all experience in analogy, besides being degrading in itself. It is not too much to say, that in the nature of things it must be impossible. The least approach to metaphysical *knowledge* demands such a degree of attention and study, as the multitude of men will not exercise; the *science* of metaphysics far more. If the soul be of another and a nobler nature than the body it inhabits, in just the same proportion will it require a superior degree of meditation and mental acuteness to behold or understand its laws. Men are compelled to study, even to understand the machinery of a steam-engine, with the whole connection of the parts open to sense. Is it to be supposed that psychological science can be more simple, in the common sense of the word, that is, easy to be understood, than physical science? Even if the soul were a machine, only nobler than the steam-engine, because more useful, from its application to a greater variety of purposes, it could not require *less* attention and study to understand its principles.

More simple the science of being certainly is, as the ground,

and containing the principles, of all other sciences ; but for this very reason more difficult of insight, and to be *mastered* only by the highest intelligences, with longest and profoundest meditation. Can the system of the intellectual universe be imagined more easy of discovery or acquisition, than that of the physical universe? And does the true system of the latter, as evolved in the meditations and scientific investigations of Sir Isaac Newton, lie open and simple to the understandings of all men, without expense of study or profound attention? To behold the absolute ground or principle of any one phenomenon, either in the mental or physical world, is to have gained the key to the whole system. To know why an apple falls, was to have found the law of creation, as to the position of its parts. And to know why the mind *perceives* an apple, would doubtless be to discover a law of universal being. To understand law in either case, or follow it in its developments, supposes difficulties encountered and overcome by a degree of thoughtful study, for which mankind at large have neither leisure nor perseverance.

Law undiscovered, the ignorance is mystery, darkness, superstition. It is superstition in religion, materialism in philosophy, fanaticism in both. Galileo was condemned to the dungeons of the Inquisition, for asserting that the earth revolved on its axis. To him, to whom law is unknown, the movements of that dread Being who acts by it, and of the mind that acts under it, with reference to and in view of it, will inevitably appear unconnected, unintelligible ; they will be misinterpreted by him, and perhaps, as ignorance is the parent of arrogance, they will be scoffed at as absurd. There are laws enunciated in the pages of Mr. Coleridge, and other pages, contemplating facts in the light of those laws, kindling with high eloquence, imparted from the meditative joy of the writer. Now, to one unacquainted with the principles, the passages produced by their influence, and translucent only in their light, would very naturally appear as destitute of meaning as the eloquent ravings of a madman. By such a one, the loftier the truth, and the nearer the source of all truth, the more mystical will it be judged. Especially, if in psychological science he has been accustomed only to the observation of phenomena, or of the operation of the faculties of the human mind, as they are enumerated in most of our books of philosophy.

Should an ignorant man enter some grand mineralogical cab-

inet, he would wonder at the folly of collecting such heaps of stones, and putting them on shelves and in glass cases with so much care; and were he to be present at some interesting lecture on the science, where the professor, surrounded by his pupils, is enunciating its laws and principles, and causing every particle of matter, from the diamond of Golconda to the common earth scooped up at the door-step, to shine in their light, with exciting interest, he would, as he beheld the enthusiasm of the teacher, and the attention of the scholar, pronounce them a set of strange beings, if not madmen. Such is the judgment of some men, whenever they contemplate a writer moving in a sphere of which they know nothing, even though he be confessedly a man of wisdom, learning, and genius!

"There is," says Mr. Coleridge, "a *philosophic* (and inasmuch as it is actualized by an effort of freedom, an artificial) consciousness, which lies beneath, or, as it were, *behind*, the spontaneous consciousness natural to all reflecting beings." — "A system, the first principle of which is to render the mind intuitive of the *spiritual* in man, (i. e. of that which lies *on the other side* of our natural consciousness,) must needs have a great obscurity for those who have never disciplined and strengthened this ulterior consciousness." The passage between these quotations, and the whole chapter from which they are taken, ought to be profoundly studied, by those who would find ultimate truth in philosophy, or know why the system, which contains it, cannot, in the common acceptation of the term, be a simple system."

The spiritual world is darkness to most minds, because of the glare and confusion, the gaudy, fantastic colors and flickering lights of the world of sense, to which the fallen soul has assimilated itself, (as certain insects turn into the color of the thing they feed on,) in a habit at war with all meditative, spiritual observation. Without remaining long, and waiting patiently, till the organs of sense cease to absorb the soul's whole activity, it will scarcely wake to the consciousness of the possession of spiritual organs, or powers of intuition for the spiritual world; much less be able to behold the countenance of truth. A man in a dark chamber must remain long before he can see anything; but gradually object after object will come into view, and the eye will have acquired a power of sight, which the full light of the sun does but diminish. In making

all things more sensible, it weakens the sensibility and power of the optic nerve. Thus Caspar Hauser for a long time possessed an accuteness of sense, which might have been deemed a supernatural marvel ; but after he had become accustomed to the strong light of day, he lost this accuteness gradually and entirely. So the soul may be said to lose its power of beholding the world of spiritual reality, of which it is a part, from the long habit of communing through the senses solely with a world of sensible glare and shadow, of which it is but a transitory tenant. Its spiritual powers, through disuse, being no longer objects of its consciousness, are even denied to have possessed any separate existence. “*Déjà la nuit (says Madame de Stael, and this remark is profound as a spiritual illustration) s’avance à mes regards ; mais le ciel n’est-il pas plus beau pendant la nuit ? Des milliers d’étoiles le décorent. Il n’est de jour qu’un désert. Ainsi les ombres éternelles reveillent d’innombrables pensées que l’éclat de la prospérité faisait oublier.*”

In the same spirit the author of *The Confessions of an Opium Eater* observes, that “a thousand accidents may and will interpose a veil between our present consciousness and the secret inscriptions on the mind ; accidents of the same sort will also rend away this veil ; but alike, veiled or unveiled, the inscription remains forever ; just as the stars seem to withdraw before the common light of day, whereas, in fact, we all know that it is the light which is drawn over them as a veil,—and that they are *waiting to be revealed, when the obscuring daylight shall have withdrawn.*” Thus, alas ! it is the obscuring daylight, in which merely we are satisfied to live, that conceals a world of pure glory, because a world of pure truth, wholly from our vision !

There is a sense, in which the true philosophy must be simple ; it will simplify all knowledge. It will be to all science, what the law of gravitation, in its discovery and application, was to astronomical science ; what the law of positive and negative electricity, or of the refrangibility of light was to other different branches of natural science ; or what the discovery of the circulation of the blood was to medical science. Law discovered is science revealed, in fulness and unity ; fulness without perplexity, unity without sameness. It is desultory phenomena, accounted for and brought together in intelligent relation ; arranged and classified in the order, beauty, and in-

telligence, imparted by the presence of one comprehensive idea. It is as the vital sap, that, circulating through the branches, gives greenness to the bud, life and freshness to the leaves, beauty and fragrance to the flower, wholesomeness and delicious flavor to the fruit. The true philosophy, though difficult of attainment in itself, will be a simplifying system, giving order and intelligent symmetry to things heretofore hidden in a supervening solution of falsehood, or looked upon as unconnected and without meaning. And this is the effect, which Leibnitz himself, in a most instructive passage, describes as the criterion of a true philosophy ; namely, that it would at once explain and collect the fragments of truth scattered through systems apparently the most incongruous."

Mr. Coleridge's system of philosophy is eminently a christian system. Its foundations, intellectual and moral, as well as its guiding and shaping principles, are in the word of God. He appeals to the scriptures with a veneration, on all occasions, that is truly delightful. It was his conviction that christianity, believed in the heart, is the perfection of human reason ; not the production *of* reason, but of God *for* the reason. He uttered noble sentiments in regard to the intellectual grandeur of the Bible, and its power in the education of the intellect, as well as the sanctification of the soul. "To give the history of the Bible as a *book*, would be little less than to relate the origin, or first excitement, of all the literature and science, that we now possess." "Be assured, never yet did there exist a full faith in the divine word, (by whom not immortality alone, but *light* and immortality were brought into the world,) which did not expand the intellect, while it purified the heart ; which did not multiply the aims and objects of the mind, while it fixed and simplified those of the desires and passions." "Religion is the poetry and philosophy of all mankind ; unites in itself whatever is most excellent in either, and while it at one and the same time calls into action, and supplies with the noblest materials, both the imaginative and the intellective faculties, superadds the interests of the most substantial and home-felt reality to both, to the poetic vision, and the philosophic idea."

He drew principles from the Bible to apply, not only to the movements of individuals, but of nations ; maintaining that that book is the best statesman's manual, as well as christian's guide ; and that, without its light, the most prosperous people are but a "busy ant-hill in calm and sunshine," a revolutionary

cauldron in storm and tempest. His views in political economy were based upon it. "Men (he thought) ought to be weighed, not counted. Their *worth* ought to be the final estimate of their value." He held it, for all n authority, a more commanding requisite of their rank, to be acquainted with the principles of government in the word of God, than with the doings of human sovereigns and legislators in the history of the world.

The fact that the philosophic system of Coleridge is kindred in its spirit with the Bible, is an argument of great weight in its favor. It is its elevated spiritual character, not less than the grandeur of his imagination, that imparts such eloquence to his metaphysical disquisitions, raising his own mind and heart to such a height of enthusiasm, as few writers, on the most animating subjects, have been able to reach. Such strains of eloquence as are continually breaking forth upon the reader, could have been inspired, one is tempted to believe, only by the countenance of truth. His is a system, "that recognises a spiritual world to come, and a spiritual nature in man to move in it; spiritual presentiments and prefigurings; spiritual wants, and obligations, and principles; and grounds of conviction and action coeval with man's spiritual being. It recognises God the Creator, and man made in his image; but wilfully fallen, the subject of an evil nature.

It is not merely a history of the human understanding. It asserts the dignity of reason, as the mind's organ of inward sense, whereby it has "the power of acquainting itself with invisible realities or spiritual objects." It recognises "truths that are either absolutely certain, or necessarily true for the human mind from the laws and constitution of the mind itself." It recognises "spiritual truths, which must derive their evidence from within, which, whoever rejects, neither will he believe them, though a man were to rise from the dead to confirm them." It strongly asserts the evil of permitting the mere understanding to usurp the dominion of the pure reason. It exhibits the entire difference between the two faculties; "the legitimate exercise of the understanding, and its limitation to objects of sense; with the errors, both of unbelief and misbelief, that result from its extension beyond the sphere of possible experience. Wherever the forms of reasoning, appropriate only to the *natural* world, are applied to *spiritual* realities, it may be truly said, that the more strictly logical the reasoning is in all its *parts*, the more irrational it is as a *whole*."

It declares that "there is more in man than can be rationally referred to the life of nature. and the mechanism of organization ; that he has a will, not included in this mechanism ; and that the will is, in an especial and præeminent sense, the spiritual part of our humanity." He demonstrates that "intelligence or self-consciousness is impossible, except by and in a will. The self-conscious spirit, therefore, is a will ; and freedom must be assumed as a *ground* of philosophy, and can never be deduced from it." He contends that the will, in its very essence, must originate its own acts ; and that "by an act to which it had determined itself, it has subjected itself to the determination of nature, (in the language of St. Paul, to the law of the flesh,) and consequently, is both corrupt and in bondage ; "the freedom of a finite will being possible under this condition only, that it has become one with the will of God." He asserts the power of the Divine will to act in the human will ; and "utterly disclaims the idea, that any *human* intelligence, with whatever power it might manifest itself, is *alone* adequate to the office of restoring health to the will." He asserts the reality of the law of conscience and the idea of God.

"God creates man in His own image. To be the image of his own eternity created He man ! Of eternity and self-existence what other likeness is possible, in a finite being, but immortality, and moral self-determination ? In addition to sensation, perception, and practical judgment (instinctive or acquirable) concerning the notices furnished by the organs of perception, all which, in *kind* at least, the dog possesses in common with his master ; in *addition* to these God gave us REASON, and with reason he gave us reflective SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS ; gave us PRINCIPLES, distinguished from the maxims and generalizations of outward experience, by their absolute and essential universality and necessity ; and above all, by superadding to reason the mysterious faculty of free-will, and consequent personal amenability, he gave us CONSCIENCE." This passage, from the fifteenth essay in the first volume of *The Friend*, though "the mere annunciation of a magnificent theme," does yet constitute, with the eloquent sentences that follow, an epitome of the truths "demonstrated and developed, explained, illustrated, and exemplified," in all the philosophical works of Coleridge.

Now, putting aside the question, whether this system will bear, as in truth it invites and encourages, profound investiga-

tion, surely there is in it something so ennobling to the human being, so animating in the contemplation, that it arrests the soul at once in admiration ; it is attractive, because it is composed of great and commanding realities ; it makes man a being of an order so much superior to the rank, which any philosophy of the mere understanding attributes to his nature, that there is nothing more to be desired, by any sympathizing, elevated mind, than that it should be found true. It would at once make the science of psychology the most interesting and exciting of all sciences, the source of interest and the enlightening sun in all ; comprehending in itself all that can permanently awaken the immortal mind, the relations of the soul to God and the spiritual world, as well as its connection with the world of sense, and the object and value of that connection. Well does the American editor of the *Aids to Reflection* (comparing its tenor with the ethics of Brown and Paley) declare, that the metaphysical views contained in this work, afford "materials for a moral system so much more rational and satisfying, so much more consistent with our moral feelings, and our idea of the Divine Being, as will go far to sustain the truth of these views themselves."

Whence is it, we are tempted to ask with astonishment, and why is it, that man should scoff at that alone in the science of being, which wears the aspect, the image of divinity, and rest content with that alone, which is akin to earth, flattering to the vanity of the mere understanding, and which has nothing godlike or supernatural, or demanding the exercise of self-conscious intelligence, or spiritual faith ? Surely, an organ of intuitive vision of spiritual realities and truths, and a free-will, that is not nature, nor subject to the mechanism of cause and effect, are desirable possessions to the human soul. And because they are possessions that cannot come through the medium of the senses, is the idea of them therefore grossly absurd ?

Yet such is man, that a system, which refers him to his own consciousness, and to the realities of his inward being, must, on that very account, prove ungrateful to his perverted feelings.

"Moving about in worlds not realized !"

Alive to the sensible, dead to the spiritual ! Taking refuge in the hum and bustle of the outward, from the accusing silence

of the inward world ! Alive to material, and in themselves, lifeless results, dead to their living principles ! Shutting the eye of reason on the eternal forms of substance and reality, towards which it is turned, and looking through the understanding, to judge according to sense, the sensible shadows with which the world is filled. Living by sight, instead of faith, both in intellect and morals !

The same obliquity and darkness in the will, which leads man to forget, neglect, and disobey his God, makes him turn his back upon truth in its grounds and principles, forget the nature of spirit amidst phenomena and experiment, and give himself up to the guidance of the understanding instead of the reason. To suppose that the influence of his fall would not extend to his intellect would not be less absurd, than to imagine that the tides would ebb and flow with the same regularity were the moon hurled from her orbit. Man loves to busy himself about the temporal part of his being, instead of the eternal. Great truths would bring him to God ; the soul of science would do the same ; he must shut himself up to little truths, and feed on the husks of external knowledge, phenomenal, experimental, fragmentary, partial, unconnected. He *loves* to do this. It is depravity in the intellect. A meditative habit would, in the contemplation of truth and being, law and idea, inevitably lead to God.

The "importance of speculative meditation, even for the worldly interests of mankind," is a great and interesting topic, especially for an age, in which meditation is becoming rare, and contempt for old usages fashionable. In living *by* sense, man mistakes the true interest, even *of* sense. It was one of Mr. Coleridge's greatest remarks, that "by *celestial* observations alone can *terrestrial* charts be constructed scientifically." Even in natural science, no unity can be learned by mere experiment. Amazing discoveries of powers and affinities may be made, but no law discovered. Have great philosophers blundered upon law in experiment, or have they contemplated law in meditation, and then gone to experiment for the proof ? The observation of phenomena may suggest solutions, or set the mind at work to find them ; and among many guesses the truth may be hit ; but it is only law that can prophecy phenomena. The result of experiment would seem to indicate so and so, is the language of the experimental philosopher, groping after external clues. If my reasoning be correct, such

and such phenomena must result, is the language of the meditative philosopher, contemplating principles.

“The knowledge of *spiritual* truth is of necessity immediate and intuitive; and the world, or natural man, possesses no higher intuitions, than those of the pure *sense*, which are the subjects of *mathematical* science.” Now, it is the office of reason to behold absolute principles; and *spiritual* intuitions are its world of action, especially if it be at one with faith. It is the office of the understanding to behold those principles acting in sense, and to follow them thus developed. The face of reason is turned towards God and the spiritual world; the face of the understanding points to the senses, and the world of material existence. To the eye of reason there is a hemisphere of glory spread out, and orbs of light hanging in the infinite expanse. To the eye of the understanding there is earth only, and its dark shadows, irradiated by beams reflected from that world of substance and spiritual glory, towards which reason looks with the calmness of intuitive vision. Understanding follows the developments of the laws of mind in inert matter, but, if left to itself, judges those developments to be mere material power, and recognises nothing *but* matter, and constructs a philosophy in respect to all man’s duties, interests, obligations, and belief, akin to the grovelling nature of materialism, and making him, in fact, but a higher order of animal. It can search out the powers of nature, so called; turn the world into a vast laboratory of experiments; and fill it with sagacious combinations, all tending to adorn man’s earthly tabernacle with things that shall perish in the using, and to foster man’s pride in what he deems the rapid advance of his own perfectibility. It goes thoughtlessly on, wherever the discovery of new appearances in nature leads it; and of itself would never dream that it had anything else to do but just to turn from everything inward, and examine and improve everything outward. It goes on, constructing new hives for the human bee to work in, where honey may be made in the smallest possible compass of space, and with the least possible expense of labor.

The mechanical philosophy, constructed under the guidance of such a faculty, becomes

“A puppet motion,
That goes with screws, the notion of a notion.”

It reduces our intellectual and moral being, with all its operations, to a level with the compulsory movements of blind and dead matter, making the soul, as an independent being, a nonexistence, or nothing better than "the mere quicksilver plating behind a looking-glass," whose only office is to throw back the images passively received from the world of sensation. The glass is the senses, the quicksilver the soul !

Under the influence of such a faculty, and of a philosophy constructed by it, whether materialism be acknowledged or not, in potential essence it prevails. Common minds, and perhaps philosophic minds, unconsciously, reason and act under its influence ;

"————— and themselves they cheat
With noisy emptiness of learned phrase,
Their subtle fluids, imparts, essences,
Self-working tools, uncaused effects, and all
Those blink omniscients, those almighty slaves,
Untenanted creation of its God !"

And all things, or rather, all products in the intellectual world, grow up in its unwholesome atmosphere, so stunted and dwarfed, that the commanding power over the soul, which belongs to the results of spiritual principles, is lost, nor does the mind, without difficulty, recognise in them its own birth-right. In that atmosphere, they are like the fungous mushroom plants, that have grown in the unwholesome shade of a tropical forest ; or like the white and sickly aspect of cellar vegetation, compared with the healthy green, and vigorous, refreshing glow, of that nourished by nature in the open sun and air. The influence of false philosophy, when the falsehood leans towards materialism, is a *malaria* to the general intellect, a brooding fog over the whole mind of the age, scarce noticed but by some few, who have climbed up a great eminence where the air is pure, yet undermining the constitution, and diffusing everywhere a pestilential, stupifying power. Its influence on the religious character of the age is not less deleterious.

The same guidance of the mere mechanical understanding, which denies life, and strikes death through the philosophy of the human soul, unspiritualizes that sacred word, which is the source of life, and reduces its living principles to a dead letter. Scientific theology cannot exist under such an influence. Neither of God, nor of our true selves, were the philosophy real which denies intuitive principles, could we gain an idea. "The existence of

an infinite spirit, of an intelligent and holy will, must, on this system, be mere articulated motions of the air. For as the function of the human understanding is no other than merely (to appear to itself) to combine and to apply the phenomena of the universe; and as these derive all their reality from the primary sensations, and the sensations again all *their* reality from the impressions *ab extra*; a God not visible, audible, or tangible, can exist only in the sounds and letters, that form his name and attributes. If in ourselves there be no such faculties as those of the will and the scientific reason, we must either have an *innate* idea of them, which would overthrow the whole system, or we can have no idea at all."

Mr. Coleridge reduces "the paralogisms, by the magic of which such a faith could find admission into minds formed for a nobler creed, to one sophism as their common genus; the mistaking the *conditions* of a thing for its *causes* and *essence*; and the process, by which we arrive at the knowledge of a faculty, for the faculty itself. The air I breathe is the *condition* of my life, not its cause. We could never have learned that we had eyes but by the process of seeing; yet having seen, we know that the eyes must have pre-existed, in order to render the process of sight possible." Again, "we learn all things, indeed, by *occasion* of experience; but the very facts so learned, force us inward on the antecedents, that must be pre-supposed in order to render experience itself possible." Again, defining the speculative reason as "*the vis theoretica, et scientifica*, or the power by which we produce, or aim to produce unity, necessity, and universality in all our knowledge, by means of principles *a priori*;" he says, "by knowledge *a priori* we do not mean, that we can know anything previously to experience, which would be a contradiction in terms; but, that having once known it by occasion of experience, (i. e. something acting upon us from without,) we then know, that it must have pre-existed, or the experience itself would have been impossible." A similar explanation may be found in a note on page 152 of the American Edition of the Friend.

On page third of the Aids to Reflection, Coleridge beautifully remarks that our living soul, "in spite of the philosophy (falsely so called) which mistakes the causes, the conditions, and the occasions of our becoming *conscious* of certain truths and realities, for the truths and realities themselves, is a house *not built with hands* and gloriously furnished." Again,

“by a science, I here mean any chain of truths, that are either absolutely certain, or necessarily true for the human mind, from the laws and constitution of the mind itself. In neither case is our conviction derived, or capable of receiving any addition from outward experience or empirical data, — i. e. matter of fact *given* to us through the medium of our senses, — though these data *may have been the occasion, or may even be an indispensable condition, of our reflecting on the former, and thereby becoming conscious of the same.*”

Surely, these distinctions are clear, accurate and important. They reveal the wide difference between a system which supposes that we may learn all things by sensation, and reflection on sensation, that is, by an operation of the mere understanding, judging according to sense ; and the infinitely nobler system, which asserts a world of intuitive principles, certain from the nature of being, and discoverable only by the pure reason ; truths, to the knowledge of which mere sensation, or reflection on sensation, could never raise us, though it may awaken within us the *consciousness* of their existence, and lead us to the earnest, stedfast, and meditative application of our organs of inward sense to their examination. Sensation, and the reflective operations of the understanding on the same, are but as steps in a ladder, up which we ascend to the region of spiritual truth, the empire of reason ; the steps are not themselves psychological truths, nor could reflection on them merely, reveal to us those truths ; and even at the topmost rounds of the ladder, it is the foot still, which is placed upon them, while the eye looks abroad upon the truth's spiritual empyrean.

If the philosophy of Coleridge be true, the system of Locke is perhaps erroneous, not so much by what it teaches, as by what it denies ; though indeed to deny truth is to teach error ; and in regard to the moral coloring of his system, one of his admirers and editors has remarked that he went to work, “at the very entrance on his essay, pointing out the true origin of all our passions and affections, namely, *sensitive pleasure and pain*, and accordingly directing us to the proper principle and end of virtue, *private happiness in each individual.*” It is rightly named *of the understanding*, and as the history of the human understanding, as an analysis and classification of its powers, and its operations in regard to ideas furnished by pure reason, it is a master-piece of acuteness. But then, if the distinction between these two faculties, and the whole grand

fabric erected on it, be not an utter fable, it is a treatise only on a portion of the human being, and that portion the least elevated, — placing, moreover, that portion for the whole, and laboring to resolve all ideas, as well as facts and appearances, into the work of the faculty, judging according to sense. With such a philosophy, it is evident that, instead of raising the soul to the contemplation of heights not to be reached, and truths not to be understood by the mere understanding, his labor would be to bring all truths, spiritual and temporal, down to the level of the same faculty judging according to sense. And at the close of certain chapters in his great work, as if there were, even in his own mind, a lurking consciousness, that a knowledge of the subjects of which it treats could not but appear unattainable through mere sensation, he adds a section, specially advising the student that there is nothing here, but what might be known through sense. In regard to the powers of the mind, the labor of the work is not an elevating, but a depreciating one, and its influence over the feelings must inevitably be corresponsive. May not this be the reason, why the soul of the student, in the pursuit of such a system, is so little excited with admiration, or made to thrill with awe, as in the presence of sublime and transcendental truth? So far as we remember our experience in the study of it, we passed through it as on a dead uninteresting level of phenomena dissected, dried, and arranged, with all the skillfulness of anatomical knowledge, and reminding us all the while of Burke's celebrated saying, that nothing can be conceived more hard, than the heart of a thorough-bred metaphysician.

It is one of the most remarkable indications which way the truth lies, that even in the examination of sensible objects, philosophers are coming to conclusions above the power of the faculty judging according to sense. Physiology itself, in the acknowledgment of life in nature, is leading to a philosophy of life *above* nature, in the science of true being. Sensation itself, and the world of sense examined in the light of reason, or even questioned by the mere understanding, make answer that they have in themselves a mystery of life, which can never be understood or explained from itself, nor by reflection on the data given to the mind through sensation, be they facts or phenomena, but by a reference to the powers of the mind, and to truths discoverable by pure reason, and necessarily true from the constitution of the mind itself. Nothing but

meditation on the laws of life in the soul, can reveal to the soul the laws of life in sense.

What, indeed, is universal nature, but a world of external occasions, to awaken consciousness of the powers of the spiritual world within us? The connection of the soul with sense, of the spiritual with the material, is a great mystery. Matter, informed and enlivened by intellectual power, is as a tablet of wax, on which the soul reads the symbols of its own laws and intuitions. The world of sense, inscribed with these living characters, the result of spiritual powers in the observer, wears only a borrowed dignity, a dignity borrowed from the ideas of the soul. Now what can be said of that system, which contemplates the world of sensation as the origin of those ideas? It is as if the mind of Milton, passing into dotage after the production of *Paradise Lost*, had read that work as the result of a peculiar combination of various forms of matter, the ink, the paper, and the printer's types. Or as if, having forgotten it all, he had set himself to learn it, as the production of one *ab extra*, a power without himself. Even so, the soul has wandered from itself to the blind study of sensations, as if they were the *sources* of power and knowledge in the soul, instead of exhibitions of that power, and *occasions* of that knowledge. What in fact is but a reflection of our own being, has been supposed a property of the outward world; even as men, moving in the desert, imagine the reflection, or rather projection, of their own persons in the distant *mirage*, to be a company of other travellers.

Behold the fearfulness of this mistake! The heaven, reflected in the bosom of a quiet lake, is gazed on in the reflection only, and as if the water and the unfathomable image were all one, and the glory of the image the result of power residing in the water. Thenceforth, the *real* heaven is forgotten, the aspect of the beholder is only downward, astronomy itself is studied in the uncertain lake, and the science is as disturbed and void of unity, as the image of that reflected heaven is broken, when a pebble thrown in, or a breath of wind moving, ripples the surface of the water. Even so, the very laws of man's spiritual being are studied in uncertain sensations, which, themselves, are often deified, as the source of all his knowledge. The world of spiritual being and principles, of which the purest forms of matter, even the glory and the beauty of the external world, are but a dim, sombre, and dense reflection,

is forgotten, nay, its very separate existence is questioned or denied ; the soul is shut up to sense, and man is left to grope for spiritual knowledge amidst its fantastic images and uncertainties, its unsteady shadowings forth or developments of the living power that informs it, where, if at any time the soul seems to recognise, among the broken fragments, glimpses of great principles, remembrances of the heaven which is their source, if still, amidst all the whirring of external machinery, it experiences those

“ Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts, before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised !”

if it raises involuntarily those

“ ————— Obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,”

that feeling of difficulty, and contradiction, and unfitness, which cannot be utterly repressed, and that faith in a higher life than nature, which even sense itself suggests, it is deemed guilty of transcendent mysticism, and visionary ravings. The yearnings after that, with which alone its immortal nature can be satisfied, the attempts to break its prison-house and soar away, are condemned as a reproach on the established condition of grovelling, and as indications of commencing insanity. Yet for all this,

“ Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing,”

shall prevail. They cannot be concealed or darkened. They arrest attention,

“ Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence ; truths, that wake
To perish never ;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor man, nor boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy !”

amidst the warring of the various elements of materialism,

their voice is 'Peace! be still! Listen to the mandate of the power that controls you, and acknowledge God!'

It is a truth (or call it a hope or belief) which we should not suppose any elevated mind would feel willing to surrender, that there are intuitive principles and ideas, inseparably and immutably connected with, and growing out of, the original constitution of man's being. If this be so, it is asked, how happens it, that ideas, the idea of God, for instance, which are the common property and birth-right of mankind, should be obliterated, apparently, in such multitudes, and so indistinct in all. Here we might answer with the great apostle. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but professing themselves to be wise *became fools, and changed the truth of God into a lie, and did not like to retain God in their knowledge.*" And this would be a just account of the difficulty; that mankind have so assimilated themselves to sense, that they have lost all *consciousness* of the existence of aught higher within them. But this is all they have lost. The ideas, though buried and forgotten, are there, and would be objects of consciousness, were this inner sense once awakened and sharpened by exercise; nor ought the absence of consciousness in regard to them, to be assumed as proof of their nonentity, nor the *occasions*, on the presentation of which they are drawn out into the consciousness by its own act, asserted as the external making known of truths from abroad. Amidst all the ruins, moral and intellectual, in which the greater part of mankind are lying, the features of those truths, though mutilated, are yet oftentimes to be distinguished; offering to the denier of aught of spiritual intuition in man, a more difficult problem for solution, than the supposition that they are a part of his constitution in the image of his Maker. When we see in a newly split rock the marks of animal or vegetable petrifications, the image of a brake or a fish impressed in the substance of the stone, we attribute it at once to its right source; nor can the soul do otherwise than believe, that the presence and agency of life have been there. There are such *fossil remains* of godlike intuitions to be found in man, in his rudest and most ignorant condition. Images there are in his soul, of supernatural existences; impressions, that must have been made in the very constitution of his nature, *while the rock was forming*, and that, however faintly and hardly to be delineated,

indicate a supernatural origin, and point to spiritual reality and life, and argue the existence in the soul of an organ of intuitive discernment of principles.

The philosophical works of Coleridge, already published, profound as they are in themselves, were yet considered by their author as a mere preparation for the full development of his "system of philosophy for a christian man." For the appearance of that work many have been long watching with impatient interest. We have seen, as yet, but one or two of the glowing letters of this illuminated manuscript, though enough to know that it is a flood of spiritual light. We know not whether the work, said to be now in a course of publication, be the same referred to repeatedly by him, apparently under different titles. Some of these references our readers will be curious to see, were it only for the view they give of what the poet and philosopher expected to accomplish. In the eighth chapter of the *Biographia Literaria*, he observes ; " I shall not dilate farther on this subject, because it will (if God grant health and permission) be treated of at large and systematically, in a work which I have been many years preparing, on the *PRODUCTIVE LOGOS*, human and divine ; with, and as the introduction to, a full commentary on the gospel of St. John." Again, afterwards, in a note on the works of Saumarez, he says, " In the preface to the work, which I have already announced, on the *logos*, I have exhibited in detail the merits of this writer and genuine philosopher, who needed only to have taken his foundations somewhat deeper and wider, to have superseded a considerable part of my labors."

The first volume of the *Biographia Literaria* was not concluded, but breaks off in the very middle of a sentence, (to which point, its author says, " the work had been transcribed for the press,") with a letter from one of Mr. Coleridge's friends, advising him not to print the remainder of the chapter on the imagination, because of its extreme compression and abstruseness, for which the minds of his readers would be utterly unprepared, and of which they would have a right to complain in a work like the *Biographia Literaria*. " I say, in the *present* work. In that greater work, to which you have devoted so many years, and study so intense and various, it will be in its proper place." " Be assured, that I look forward anxiously to your great book on the *CONSTRUCTIVE PHILOSOPHY*, which you have promised and announced ; and that

I will do my best to understand it." The letter is admirable ; though often and earnestly have we wished that it never had been written, since its effect was the reservation of the chapter for a future publication, and the statement only of its main result.

On page 104, of the *Aids to Reflection*, its author again announces his great work thus : "The whole scheme of the christian faith, including *all* the articles of belief common to the Greek and Latin, the Roman and Protestant church, with the three-fold proof, that it is *ideally, morally, and historically* true, will be found exhibited and vindicated in a proportionally large work, the principal labor of my life since manhood, and which I am now preparing for the press, under the title, *Assertion of Religion*, as necessarily *involving* revelation ; and of christianity, as the only revelation of permanent and universal validity."

One passage, in the letter above referred to, is so masterly a description of the feelings of its writer amidst the depths of Mr. Coleridge's philosophy, that we cannot but quote it.

"The effect on my *feelings*, on the other hand, I cannot better represent, than by supposing myself to have known only our light, airy, modern chapels of ease, and then, for the first time, to have been placed, and left alone, in one of our largest gothic cathedrals, in a gusty moonlight night of autumn ; 'now in glimmer, and now in gloom ;' often in palpable darkness, not without a chilling sensation of terror ; then suddenly emerging into broad, yet visionary lights, with colored shadows of fantastic shapes, yet all decked with holy insignia and mystic symbols ; and ever and anon, coming out full upon pictures, and stone-work images of great men, with whose *names* I was familiar, but which looked upon me with countenances, and an expression, the most dissimilar to all I had been in the habit of connecting with those names. Those whom I had been taught to venerate as almost superhuman in magnitude of intellect, I found perched in little fret-work niches, as grotesque dwarfs ; while the grotesques, in my hitherto belief, stood guarding the high altar with all the characters of apotheosis. In short, what I had supposed substances, were thinned away into shadows, while everywhere shadows were deepened into substances : "

"If substance may be called, what shadow seemed,
For each seemed either ! "

We find it difficult to close this article, without a word upon Mr. Coleridge's poetry, which may well be regarded as a luminous commentary on his philosophy. The same spirit animated both, and either might be called the soul of the other. If the tenderness and pathos of the heart of a true poet were never absent from his trains of speculative thinking, the meditative habit of the true philosopher is equally manifest in all his poetical efforts. Even in the translation of *Wallenstein*, the spirit of his philosophy is present, not less than the power of his imagination; that great work conveys almost as adequate an image both of his philosophical and poetical being, as can be found even in his own eminently original compositions. The full amount which Mr. Coleridge has accomplished in philosophy, is yet to be determined; what he might have done in poetry, every individual feels, who can justly appreciate the power and beauty of all that he published to the world. Nor can we cease to lament that he should have passed through life, without dedicating his powers to the composition of a grand philosophic poem.

It makes us weep inwardly, as often as we read his "meditative poems," and experience, again and again, in the deepest recesses of the soul, a sense of their extreme beauty, to think of that noble mind, and the many noble schemes it left unaccomplished. Whether from causes within or without, in his own power to have removed or not; whether he were Prometheus bound, the vultures raging at his heart, compelled to waste his vast intellectual energy in indignant lamentations to the wind, or Prometheus unbound, but destitute of self-control, indolent, and wasting as often as using the fire from heaven's altar; it makes but little difference in our sense of bitter regret for the loss we feel we have sustained. Though aware of the value of those efforts of his intellect, which in his prose works he has given to posterity, and that perhaps his mind would not have been employed for more lasting benefit to his race in the exercise of his poetic powers, yet we cannot bear to think that such a genius should have dwelt among us, for so many long years, capable of so working, that without all doubt he might have produced a poem, which should have taken its place beside the *Paradise Lost*, a perfect orb of light for all future generations to gaze upon, a fountain of purity, strength and refreshment for the world's mind to have resorted to; that he should have been among us, and left us at length, with only

here and there a solitary polished shaft, a disconnected pedestal, a half-constructed arched way, of all the materials for that magnificent temple which he might have erected.

The grandeur and exceeding beauty of these fragments show what the glory of that temple would have been; for even now, there is no living genius, or if one, only one, who could bring a stone to compare with the precious workmanship of shaft, pedestal or arch. The very dreams of his mind were of richer stuff, of more spiritual texture, and extraordinary beauty, than all the poets since the time of Milton could supply. Images, that almost in themselves were poems, seemed the habitual medium, through which his mind communed even with itself. His familiar meditations were poetry, and his poetry the uttered language of a meditative mood. His imagination was eminently original and creative; an architect, powerful at any moment to upraise

“A wilderness of building, sinking far,
And self-withdrawn into a wondrous depth,
Far sinking into splendor, — without end!”

And language of such spiritual beauty, that it was worthy to be the servitor to his imagination, and able to embody its ideal creations in the vividdest reality of the archetype, almost with the very breath of the soul upon them, fell from him with no more apparent effort, than the surging music of a wind-harp, as it rises and falls with the movement of the passing breeze.

If ever a spontaneous poet existed, Coleridge was certainly one. Sweetness of feeling, depth and sublimity of thought, the most beautiful imagery, and language that seemed itself a shining atmosphere, both of thought and imagery, seemed in him not so much the products, as parts of his intellectual being. He had all the stores of learning at command, and his genius dwelt among them like a permeating spirit, transfusing all things into an expression of itself, the soul of all. If to his great natural powers he had added the persevering fixedness of purpose, that distinguished his friend Wordsworth, in the realization of some permanent work, doubtless the planet added to the firmament of England's literary glory would have shone brighter than his friend's. It would have been a morning star. For, with what perfectness of execution is ideal beauty realized in those short meditative poems of his, that seemed, in the movement of his genius, an exercise as natural as to breathe. Perfect gems they are in themselves, and bearing proof, that

deeper in the soil existed materials, where castellated palaces might have been hewn from one great diamond.

That meditative pathos, which he describes as one of Wordsworth's most valuable characteristics, existed also in himself, with a power much more concentrated. His mind was always finding symbols of spiritual being, and proofs of intelligent agency, indwelling and outshining through every lineament in the speaking face of nature. And he loved, in the exercise of his poetical genius, to shed over all images and things, and combinations from created objects, a softening, hallowed, and sacredly significant light; even like that poured at sunset over all the rising landscape, making that lovelier, which before was lovely, and giving beauty and intelligent expression to that which seemed to have none; till it appears to the beholder as if all nature, silent through excess of gratitude, were entranced in an act of evening adoration to the Eternal. It is the peculiar and invaluable characteristic, both of his poetry and philosophy, to inform everything with meaning; he draws aside the dark veil of materialism, and reveals earth, air, and sea, instinctive with intelligent life; everywhere we behold an Omnipresent Deity, all things, visible and invisible, unfolding the dread self-existing cause and ground of being, as living symbols of his power and glory. Creation is no more a temple of omnipotence without its soul. As poet or philosopher, through imagination combining and describing symbols of truth, or in philosophy explaining the language of its hieroglyphics in nature, he peopled the universe with praises.

“—————Solitude was not.

He heard upon the wind the articulate voice
Of God; and angels to his sight appeared,
Crowning the glorious hills of Paradise;
Or, through the groves gliding like morning mist,
Enkindled by the sun. He sate and talked
With winged messengers; who daily brought
To his small island in the ethereal deep
Tidings of joy and love.”

He has seemed to live and breathe, to converse and philosophize through the medium of poetry, as the highest form of truth. The few fragments we have in his works are only portions of an unintermitting process, rarely visible, that under all circumstances was going on within his mind. There, day and night, powers rarely conferred on man were working, and har-

monists constructing imaginable melodies, of which the strains we have heard were only snatches made audible at distant intervals. It is as if we stood beside a great gothic cathedral, in the heart of which a full choir are performing in unbroken circle the grand and solemn compositions of Handel or Mozart, and sometimes in the half-opening of the aisle doors, a closing harmony, or a powerful swell from the mid-volume of sound, bursts forth upon us.

“————— Such delights
As float to earth, permitted visitants,
When, in some hour of solemn jubilee,
The massy gates of paradise are thrown
Wide open, and forth come in fragments wild
Sweet echoes of unearthly melodies,
And odors, snatched from beds of amaranth,
And they, that from the crystal river of life
Spring up on freshened wing, ambrosial gases!”

The versatility of his genius is proved in the success with which he has tried almost every style in poetry. His power over the supernatural, and in the province of the affections, and in the description of natural beauty, especially in the revelation of mind in nature, is always eminent. A master of thought, he is equally a master of language, in the beauty and purity of words, and in the sweetness and seemingly spontaneous harmony and melody, with which they flow together. The incomparable grace, simplicity, and richness of his language, carry us back to the freshest and most delightful age of the English tongue. His power in its use is exhibited, as clearly as any where, in the translation of *Wallenstein*. Many a passage in that work he has composed in such sort, that one might easily persuade himself he is reading Shakspeare. Our limits compel us to refrain; but do not our readers, while perusing a passage like the following, involuntarily exclaim, here breathes the very soul of the bard of Avon?

“Lo there! the Soldier, rapid architect!
Builds his light town of canvas, and at once
The whole scene moves and bustles momentarily,
With arms, and neighing steeds, and mirth, and quarrel,
The motley market fills; the roads, the streams
Are crowded with new freights, trade stirs and hurries!
But on some morrow morn, all suddenly,
The tents drop down, the horde renews its march.

Dreary and solitary as a churchyard,
The meadow and down-trodden seed-plot lie
And the year's harvest is gone utterly."

Or this :

" Oh day thrice lovely ! when at length the soldier
Returns home into life ; when he becomes
A fellow-man among his fellow-men.
The colors are unfurled, the cavalcade
Marshals, and now the buzz is hushed, and hark !
Now the soft peace-march beats, home, brothers, home !
The caps and helmets are all garlanded
With green boughs, the last plundering of the fields.
The city gates fly open of themselves,
They need no longer the petard to tear them.
The ramparts are all filled with men and women,
With peaceful men and women, that send onward
Kisses and welcomings upon the air
Which they make breezy with affectionate features.
From all the towers rings out the merry peal,
The joyous vespers of a bloody day.
Oh happy man ! Oh fortunate ! for whom
The well-known door, the faithful arms are open,
The faithful tender arms with mute embracing."

Did our limits permit the extract, the beautiful tale of *Selma*, printed in the appendix to the tragedy of *Remorse*, would be a passage more exquisite, we think, in itself, and more like *Shakespeare*, than almost any other portion of *Mr. Coleridge's* poetry.

The *sublimity* of *Mr. Coleridge's* poetical genius would have been proved by the hymn before sunrise in the Vale of Chamouny, were there no other evidence of it. Perhaps there is but one other passage in the English language, of similar length, so truly sublime ; and that is, the expulsion of the rebel angels from heaven by the Messiah, at the close of the sixth book of the *Paradise Lost*. In like manner, the *magnificence* of his genius would have been unquestionable, had he never written any other pieces but "The Frost at Midnight," or "This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison," or the "Ode to Dejection," or even the dreamy fragment of the "Vision of Kubla Khan." Almost any one of the pieces in the *Sibylline Leaves*, especially of those which he has classed under the title of "Meditative Poems," would have put equally beyond question the greatness of his genius in respect to philosophic thought and meditative pathos. Its vivid and fantastic power in exhibit-

ing the wildness and splendor and mystery of supernatural things, as personified and realized in description, sometimes in beauty, sometimes in terror, sometimes in awful obscurity, sometimes in a glare like that from midnight conflagrations, "now in glimmer and now in gloom," yet always with singular boldness, is familiar to every reader of the "War Eclogue," of the "Ancient Mariner," and of "Christabel." Then too, its domestic tenderness and sweetness, its purity in love, unsullied as the flowers that drink the dew, its mildness and affectionate friendliness, its entire freedom from misanthropy, its current of energetic thought, combined with healthful energy of feeling, and its exquisite and quiet accuracy in pictures of shade and sunshine, and shrubs, and trees, and goodly scenes in nature ;

" ————— Here the bleak mount ;
 The bare bleak mountain, speckled thin with sheep ;
 Grey clouds, that, shadowing, spot the sunny fields ;
 And river, now with bushy rocks o'erbrowed,
 Now winding bright and full with naked banks ;
 And seats and lawns, the abbey and the wood,
 And cots, and hamlets, and faint city-spire ;
 The channel there, the islands and white sails,
 Dim coasts, and cloudlike hills, and shoreless ocean ; —"

all these, with kindred qualities, are displayed in many of his pieces, in most delightful union. Take, for instance, the poem from which the preceding lines are selected, entitled "Reflections on having left a Place of Retirement ;" with what sweet simplicity of description does it open ; it should be compared with the preceding piece, "The Eolian Harp," which is still more beautiful, the opening lines being a description of the same scene at evening.

"Low was our pretty cot : our tallest rose
 Peep'd at the chamber-window. We could hear
 At silent noon, and eve, and early morn,
 The sea's faint murmur. In the open air
 Our myrtles blossomed ; and across the porch
 Thick jasmins twined ; the little landscape round
 Was green and woody, and refreshed the eye."

Delightful, indeed, are Mr. Coleridge's descriptions of nature, imbued, as they always are, with a coloring from his own heart ; "a light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud, enveloping the earth." A stream of life is poured through creation, and a voice is sent forth from the soul, to be echoed back from visi-

ble things, as if it were indeed the answer of a soul dwelling in them, and constituting the principle of material beauty, and “of all sweet sounds the life and element.”

In general Mr. Coleridge's images flow through his poetry like a water-brook through a green pasture. He possessed, too, that power of genius, which condenses its imagery, and presents it in general terms, for the mind of the reader to carry into detail; that power which, by one word or circumstance, reveals a wide unmeasured vast, as a flash of lightning in a dark night will light up the whole horizon to the traveller; that power, which so operates on the mind of the reader, that the part undescribed, yet called up by the signal of the poet, shall be more powerful than the part described, which is merely the signal that the poet uses, as if he had pointed with his finger and said, look, it comes. The difference between true poets lies eminently in the different degrees in which this power is possessed. It makes the difference between poetry that produces a confused impression by a profusion of brilliant epithets and details, and that which calls up in the mind, by single, simple words and well-selected circumstances, more than in such detail could be conveyed in volumes. Image after image presents whole landscapes, and word after word constitutes, as it were, the key-note to strains of unwritten melody. The language of a great poet is a sort of hieroglyphics for the imagination. Detail is the work of mere fancy; the power of conversing with the soul through the medium of these comprehensive hieroglyphics is imagination. Wordsworth presents a noble instance of the exertion of this power from Milton. “Hear,” says he, “this mighty poet, speaking of the Messiah going forth to expel from heaven the rebellious angels;

“Attended by ten thousand thousand saints
He onward came; far off his coming shone;”

the retinue of saints, and the person of the Messiah himself, lost almost, and merged in the splendor of that indefinite abstraction, “His coming!”

It is injustice to characterize Mr. Coleridge's poetical works as fragments; nor would they, if productions of an inferior mind, ever be so characterized. It is our sense of the magnificence of his genius, that dwarfs, as it were, its pub-

lished fruits in our view. Little, comparatively, as he has given us in quantity, it is much in quality; nor ought we to utter the voice of regret, when pages of *such* poetry are before us.

“Long may the Spring,
Quietly as a sleeping infant’s breath,
Send up cold waters to the traveller,
With soft and even pulse!”

To Wordsworth and Coleridge, the latter the greatest philosopher and highest poetical genius, the other the most philosophic poet of modern times, the age is indebted in obligations, which it is difficult adequately to measure or acknowledge. If to exert an almost magic power over minds of the noblest structure, and brightest promise; if to turn the hearts of the young with keen and animated gaze to the unveiled countenance of truth; if to waken and call forth their best energies of intellect; if to form them to habits of thought and meditation; if to rescue them from the baneful influence of that materialism, which has lain with a weight like death upon universal science; if to make them feel the difference between wisdom and knowledge, and prize the latter only as a step in the acquisition of the former; if to enkindle the imagination, and at the same time define its nature, enrich its wealth, and discipline its power; if to detect and reprove the usurpations of the understanding, and give freedom to faith as above the understanding; if to lead them to the contemplation of law in nature, and to the insight of principles in their own being, and to a reverential acknowledgment of the universal presence of the dread ground of all being;—if all this can constitute a claim to admiration and love, surely these venerable men may demand it.

Nor can any tell how far the exertion of their powers, the widely shining light of their intellect, may be the precursors of some great and beneficial change on earth. The full result of movements in the heavenly bodies, even upon our atmosphere, it takes ages to ascertain; and there are stars, whose light has been travelling ever since creation, and yet has not reached us. The thoughts left on record, and those awakened in other intellects, by these minds, will be felt through the dateless revolutions of eternity. How far the works of genius in any de-

partment, may be found hereafter to have filled their proper and necessary places in the advancement of the reign of righteousness on earth ; what sphere an Allston, in the quiet, persevering pursuit of his noble art, may be found to have occupied in the spread of christianity, to the surprise of multitudes, in whose contracted view an hour of action for present utility has more to do with extending its spiritual kingdom than years of the meditations of genius, we cannot now determine. This we know, that sanctified genius, in all its departments, works and meditates for God. The truths of philosophy, as brought to view in the writings of Coleridge, are too nearly connected with those of theology, nay, they are too much the same with the realities of the word of God, not to exert a mighty influence in preparing the mind of the age for the reception of clearer, more scientific, and more spiritual views in religion ; unalloyed, we hope, by any mixture of that grovelling scepticism, which refuses to receive, because it cannot understand, truths of all others in the universe of being the sublimest and most interesting. Let but “the fresh air blow through the soul’s shut up mansion ;” let the stifling influences of materialism be swept away, and an atmosphere congenial to spiritual truth, the universal, invigorating breath of unfallen nature, be breathed and lived in by man as a spiritual being, and it needs no prophet to foretell the glorious results.

“ Creature all grandeur, son of truth and light,
Up from the dust ! the last great day is bright,
Bright on the Holy Mountain, round the Throne,
Bright where in borrowed light the far stars shone.
Look down ! the depths are bright ! and hear them cry,
‘ Light ! light ! ’ — Look up ! ’tis rushing down from high !
Regions on regions, — far away they shine ;
’Tis light ineffable, ’tis light divine ! —
‘ Immortal light, and life forevermore !’
Off through the deep is heard from shore to shore
Of rolling worlds ! — Man, wake thee from the sod !
Awake from death, awake ! and LIVE WITH GOD ! ”
